



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Darlington County Named Winner of Healthy SC Challenge**  
*County Residents are invited to Governor's Mansion in honor of achievement*

**Columbia, S.C. – May 1, 2006** – Governor Mark Sanford and First Lady Jenny Sanford today issued an open invitation to residents for Darlington County – winner of the Healthy SC Challenge – to visit the Governor's Mansion on May 18<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m. Determined through data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Darlington County has the highest percentage improvement in its overall health and wellness as measured by percent change in body mass index, smoking rates and physical activity combined.

"Congratulations to the residents from Darlington for their improved health," said First Lady Jenny Sanford. "My hope is that as people see the example set in Darlington County, more and more South Carolinians will begin to make changes towards a healthier lifestyle. While the CDC results show good progress in dropping rates of smoking for Darlington and other counties, we're still gaining weight and not exercising enough. If we do not reverse these trends, our citizens' quality of life will continue to decrease and our state will be under tremendous financial strain. Let's all look to Darlington and other healthier South Carolina locations and make changes, even small ones, that can make a big difference in our health."

In the past year, activities and programs have emerged in Darlington County that promote health to residents. New walking trails, wellness programs for local government and private sector employees, and participation in the YMCA Shrinkdown are among changes contributing to improved health in Darlington's residents. More information about the open house at the Governor's Mansion will be forthcoming to Darlington residents.

The Healthy SC Challenge kicked off in May 2004 as the Sanford family's effort to encourage South Carolina to place more emphasis on improving their health. Groups and organizations who have worked to improve the health of their communities will soon be announced and will be recognized along with the winning county. Meant to recognize potential for better health, the winning county award goes to the county with the most combined improvement in CDC data trends. Other results include:

**Top Three Most Improved Counties**

- 1) Darlington
- 2) Lancaster
- 3) Berkeley

**Top Three Healthiest Counties**

- 1) Beaufort
- 2) Richland
- 3) Greenville

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*The Healthy SC Challenge is an outcome-based, cooperative effort aimed at encouraging individuals, communities and organizations across the state to show shared responsibility in developing innovative ways to improve the health of South Carolina's citizens. For more information about the Healthy SC Challenge, please visit [www.healthysc.gov](http://www.healthysc.gov), or contact Meghan McGuire at 803-737-2325.*